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By-Weir, Leona Scott

IRA and Reading Certification in Ohio.

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Since November 1966, the Research Committee of Ohio Council of the International Reading Association (IRA) has been working for Reading Certification in Ohio. By December 1967, contact was established with the State Department of Education through the Division of Teacher Education and Certification, and definite plans for recommendations for certification were made. Certification problems in teacher shortage, time elements, and impersonal factors were studied; standards that would establish reading as a specialized area by certification were decided on. Three educators involved in college reading selected required subject areas and recommended a minimum of three semester hours each in Survey of Reading, Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Disabilities, and Laboratory Practice in Reading Improvement. Final recommendations were sent to interested people in Ohio and a hearing has been scheduled for consideration of the recommendations. (NS)

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Leona Scott Weir
Supervisor of Intermediate Instructio
Cuyahoga Falls City Schools
431 Stow Street
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221
Chairman, Research Committee
Ohio Council IRA

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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IRA AND READING CERTIFICATION IN OHIO

Thursday, April 25, 1968 - 10:30-11:30 a.m.
8A. The State's Role in Improving Reading Instruction
Certification of Reading Teachers and Specialists

During the past 18 months the Research Committee of Ohio Council IRA has directed all efforts toward a single goal: Reading Certification in Ohio. Developing guidelines for committee action resembled planning a long, hazardous trip.

The beginning

In November, 1966, at the Eleventh Annual Reading Conference of Ohio Council IRA, the Research Committee generated the spark that has moved IRA forward on the road to Reading Certification in Ohio. The committee, aware that IRA in Ohio is a comparatively small but very dedicated organization, charted the trip carefully. We realized that much help would be needed from others: (a) permission from the State Department, (b) support from powerful educational groups, (c) cooperation of IRA representatives in all

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sections of Ohio, and (d) consultant services of educational leaders who "knew the road".

Progress in 1967

By January 1967, direct contact had been established with the State Department of Education. Our meeting with members of the Division of Teacher Education and Certification served a dual purpose: (a) IRA was established as a dedicated, competent organization with valuable services to offer toward improving reading instruction in Ohio and (b) we gained insight relating to the many problems we could expect to encounter along the road to Reading Certification.

In March, 1967, IRA's intention to work for special certification in reading was presented to a group of key educators representing Ohio Education Association and the Ohio Council on Teacher Education. This organization includes college administrators, State Department personnel and public school representatives.

On May 16, 1967, IRA was invited to participate in a Targets Conference sponsored by the State Department of Education. Teacher certification in Ohio was reviewed and discussed. Again, IRA's hope for specialized reading certification was presented.

During the summer months, we took inventory of our progress. IRA had made necessary contacts by little concrete progress had been made toward the ultimate goal of certification. As a result of careful reassessment of the situation, we decided to

refuel with "jet" power. In December, 1967, three leading Ohio educators joined the Research group as Consultants to the Committee:

Dr. Mary Austin - Case Western Reserve - Cleveland whose name is synonymous with reading

Mr. Bernard Miller - a member of the Certification Staff in the State Department

Dr. Harold Wilson - a member of Board of Directors in the Akron Area Council IRA and Superintendent of Cuyahoga Falls City Schools.

As a result of the December, 1967, meeting of the Research Committee, definite plans for Recommendations for Certification were resolved. The discussion was sometimes stormy and forceful but practical and productive suggestions resulted. The recommendations that were eventually accepted were geared to meet the specific needs and problems that exist in Ohio.

The problems

Problems relating to certification can be classified into three major categories: A. teacher shortages, B. time elements, and C. impersonal factors.

A. Teacher shortages

1. The impact of ESEA Title I programs

In a national survey (1967) made by OCIRA Research Chairman all (100%) 50 State Departments of Education and the District of Columbia returned responses to the certification questionnaire. The results show that Ohio is the only state that has related certification for remedial subjects directly with ESEA Title I personnel

The Division of Teacher Education and Certification, Ohio Department of Education has released several certification guidelines during 1966-68. The contents reflect the serious problem of teacher shortage related to staffing federal projects.

On February 4, 1966, a bulletin (6) from the Director Of Certification indicates the need for finding remedial reading teachers in secondary schools:

> May I call to your attention the statement concerning Temporary Certification for Teachers for the High School (grades 9-12) Remedial Reading Program under Title I of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, contained in a bulletin dated January 5, 1966, from R. A. Horn, to ALL School Administrators, pages 2 and 3.
>
> It means simply this: No one will be approved for Temporary Certification for the remainder of this school year (1965-66) who does not hold a Standard Elementary Certificate of Provisional, Professional, Permanent, or Life grade (not cadet or Retraining and who does not hold a Bachelor's Degree from an approved, accredited institution. Such Temporary Certificate WILL NOT be renewed for 1966-67 unless the holder thereof has completed six (6) semester hours of an approved remedial reading program, details for which will be released later from Mr. Stephen's office.

Resulting from further pressures to clarify certification for employees in Title I ESEA Programs, a bulletin (1) was issued April 15, 1966, to provide emergency policies of certification in all remedial instruction. The guidelines relating to certification for teaching remedial reading were:

Remedial Instruction

1. Reading

   a. The holder of an elementary certificate, other than temporary, is considered properly certificated for teaching remedial reading in grades 1-8, inclusive.

b. The holder of provisional or higher grade elementary certificate may, upon request of the employing superintendent, be granted a temporary certificate for the teaching of remedial reading in grades 9-12, inclusive.

c. The holder of a provisional or higher grade high school certificate valid for the teaching of English is considered properly certificated for the teaching of remedial reading in grades 7-12, inclusive, for the remainder of the 1965-66 school year, Summer 1966, and the school year 1966-67, but must complete two courses (4-6 semester hours) in remedial reading toward completion of a teaching field or special certificate in remedial reading for 1967-1968 and years following.

d. The holder of provisional or higher grade high school certificate valid for the teaching of English, may upon request of the employing superintendent, be granted a temporary certificate for the teaching of remedial reading in the elementary school.

e. The holder of either a high school certificate valid for the teaching of English, or an elementary certificate issued upon the basis of a degree, will, upon completion of two courses (4-6 semester hours) in remedial reading be issued a provisional special certificate valid for the teaching of remedial reading in grades 1-12, inclusive.

2. Arithmetic (information is not relevant to this manuscript.)

3. Temporary certificates issued in any field under the above conditions will be valid for only year only. To continue in the same field of remedial teaching, the teacher employed under such certificate will be required to complete two courses in a pattern of remedial instruction. Upon completion of these courses the provisional special certificate will be issued.

In the most recent bulletin (8) issued January 15, 1968, affecting temporary certification for 1968-69, Remedial Subjects are listed under Acute Shortages and include not only ESEA Title I Programs but similar programs. In the text that follows, look for the expressions indefinitely and if he desires. These statements hold disturbing implications for future certification proposals. The bulletin states:

> Remedial Subjects--Teachers engaged in ESEA Title I and similar programs who now hold temporary certificates for teaching remedial reading or remedial arithmetic will be recertificated for 1968-69 upon completion of the

following requirements:

1. Teachers with standard elementary certificates teaching in grades 9=12: Renewal of the temporary certificate with no additional course work required

2. Teachers with high school certificates in English or mathematics teaching remedial subjects in grades 9-12: Completion of course in Techniques of Remediation and either Psychology of Reading or Methods of Teaching Arithmetic in the Elementary Grades whichever is appropriate to the certificate desired. The High School certificate then will be validated for the remedial subject.

A teacher with a high-school certificate validated for a remedial subject may teach the subject in an elementary grade on a temporary elementary certificate, which may be renewed indefinitely without additional work.

A teacher with an elementary certificate may teach remedial subjects at the elementary level without further certification. By completing the courses specified for secondary teachers, however, he may have the certificate endorsed for the remedial subject, if he desires.

The above measures are attempts to meet an overwhelming demand for reading teachers working under ESEA Title I. The stability of many such programs relies entirely on the amount of federal funding. If federal funds should be reduced or removed, some programs may be cancelled if local boards cannot absorb the cost. In short, some school systems consider these reading positions as temporary as the temporary certification that authorizes the teacher to work in such a situation. Established minimum standards will encourage teachers to take specialized training and thereby stabilize and improve the quality of instruction.

2. Shortage of trained teachers

A shortage of trained teachers and a definite lack of specially trained teachers influence the reaction of state agencies regarding certification standards.

The 1965 Statistical Summary made by the Ohio Department of Education (7) shows that only 9,388 new teachers out of 21,242 potential teachers prepared in Ohio Colleges chose to give teaching service in Ohio. This means that the necessary supply must be recruited from other states and other areas of employment or that untrained personnel must be granted temporary authorization to teach.

Adding to this admitted shortage of qualified teachers is the demand of federally-funded programs that in 1966 alone required 2000 teachers in Ohio schools. (2) In the fiscal year of 1967, there were 869 Title I projects recorded. Over 600 of these projects were related to reading programs. (9)

This general shortage of teachers combined with ESEA Title I demands creates the necessity for temporary certification in many situations. Established minimum standards would encourage and force interested teachers operating under temporary measures to seek specialized training.

3. No out-of-state certification reciprocity

The problem of recruiting out-of-state teachers is compounded by the fact that Ohio has no certification reciprocity with other states. At least 40 states have worked out operable provisions for certification reciprocity. Ohio is not one of these. (3)

Until Ohio has minimum standards for comparing and evaluating credentials for out-of-state teachers, the professional quality of reading teachers transferring into Ohio cannot be adequately determined.

4. Low standards for elementary certification

In 1951, only 19 states required a Bachelor's Degree for the elementary teaching certificate. In 1967, 46 states required a Bachelor's Degree. Ohio has been one of the 4 remaining states delaying to meet this standard. After September1, 1968, Ohio will require a Bachelor's Degree as a minimum standard for an Elementary Teaching Certificate. (10) The Cadet Elementary Certificate will not be issued after October 1, 1968. (12)

In brief, as basic certification standards are improved, specialized certification requirements should be increased.

B. Time elements

1. Lack of adequate reading specialization training centers

Very few of Ohio's 51 public and private colleges approved for teacher education offer programs of training for reading specialization. The State Department is currently reviewing the program being offered. (5)

It is understandable that certification agencies can hardly require a teacher to show credit for areas of instruction that are not provided in college training centers. Yet, some colleges probably will not develop necessary programs unless a certification requirement forces them to act.

Making a required credit course available is of no value to the teacher-in-training for reading specialization unless the instructor is by training and experience a reading specialist. Any instructor or graduate student can tell a

teacher-in-training how to teach but only an experienced master teacher with specialized training can show the potential teacher what he needs to know and do in order to become a resourceful, successful reading teacher.

The Schools of Education in teacher-training institutions need to take a careful and comprehensive look at the quality of staff employed to train teachers. Also, colleges need to reappraise the use of inexperienced graduate students who "fill in" to train our new teachers.

This problem restated means that until Ohio is equipped to train reading specialists, high-sounding minimum standards seem ridiculous to experienced teachers and to a state certification agency. Colleges in Ohio can no longer ignore their responsibility to provide programs to train *reading teachers*. Schools of education must establish effective training centers that meet the demands for minimum standards if reading certification is to become a reality.

2. State government procedures

In initiating new certification for specialized areas of instruction, many legal steps must be considered.

The State Board of Education is the policy making body for Ohio Schools. This Board was created in 1956 and is composed of members from each of the Congressional districts elected for six-year terms. (5) Among other responsibilities these members (a) prescribe minimum school

standards and (b) determine who should teach and how they should be prepared. The Board's decisions in these two responsible areas control the future of IRA proposals for Specialized Reading Certification.

State government regulations in Ohio (4) require that a request for a new area of certification be presented to a selected, representative panel of State Department personnel. If the recommendations are accepted, the suggested standards must be made available to the public for one year. Following this period of time, a second hearing will be held at which time action will be taken on the recommendation.

C. Impersonal factors

1. The impact of "packaged curricula"

A strong impersonal force that affects certification problems is the method by which federal funds are often spent by schools. The effect of federal efforts to influence educational standards seems almost unbelievable. As federal funds "pour in", many schools, in desperation to meet imposed deadlines, choose "packaged curricula" and "packaged audio-visual materials". Large corporations are taking over many educational supply firms and text book companies. The combination of attractive packaging and increased sales pressure practiced by large corporations call for careful and professional decisions in selecting educational materials. A well-trained reading teacher is needed in local schools to evaluate the contents of "packaged materials". The need for functional and

effective instructional reading material is too great to risk making an unwise purchase.

2. The impact of commercial reading centers

With the advent of federal funding of programs outside the usual school operations and organizations, commercial reading centers are "springing up" in Ohio. Until the state of Ohio establishes and requires educational training standards for personnel employed to work with children in such centers, parents cannot be assured that the "teacher" hired to be a clinician, diagnostician, and remediation specialist meets any required standards for teaching. Until such commercial ventures are required by Ohio law to meet specialized reading certification standards, the centers will probably continue to operate as long as they meet health and sanitation standards. These latter standards are strictly enforced in Ohio.

Present status

After a careful study of the complicated certification problems that exist in Ohio, the committee wisely decided upon minimum standards that would establish recognition for reading as a specialized area by certification.

Three educators in the field of college reading selected the required subject areas (11) on the basis of practical application for use by prospective reading teachers: Dr. Mary Austin - Case Western Reserve, Mrs. Gertrude Badger - University of Akron, and Dr. Marjorie Snyder - Kent State University. The

following areas indicate the results of their deliberations:

D. A minimum of 9 semester hours in the following special areas:

1. Foundations or Survey of Reading Philosophy, psychology and sociology of teaching reading; the scope and sequence of reading instruction
---3 semester hours

2. Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Difficulties--Causes of reading difficulties, diagnostic techniques and instruments, corrective procedures and materials
---3 semester hours

3. Laboratory Practice in Reading-Improvement--Supervised field experience in diagnosis and remediation
---3 semester hours

All final recommendations for minimum standards are based on decisions made by the Research Committee.

The brochure of recommendations has been mailed to (a) all superintendents in Ohio (b) all local and state IRA members, (c) key personnel at the State Department of Education, (d) selected principals in Ohio, and (e) all directors of Teacher Education in colleges and universities.

The reactions of Ohio educators to the recommendations have been very favorable.

We have been assured by the Director of Certification that a hearing for presentation of recommendations will be scheduled with the State Board in April, 1968.

On the road to Certification, travel has been slow and at times frustrating, but the spark of hope generated in November, 1966

has grown larger and brighter as we glimpse the possibility of success in April, 1968. Until then, we are waiting, waiting, waiting...

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